

Samuel Houston to Andrew Jackson, September 19, 1829, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SAM HOUSTON TO JACKSON.

Cherokee Nation, in Arkansas, September 19, 1829.

My dear Sir, I am verry feeble, from a long spell of fever, which lasted me some 38 days, and had well nigh closed the scene of all my mortal cares, but I thank my God that I am again cheered by the hope of renewed health. I would not write at this time but that I can not deny myself the pleasure of tendering to you my heartfelt acknowledgement for your kind favor, which reached me, when I was barely able to peruse its contents. It was a cordial to my spirits, and cheered me in my sickness. From the course which I had pursued in relation to the cause of my abando[n]ment of society, my absolute refusal to gratify the inquiring world, my entire silence, because it comported, with my notions of honor, and a willingness to sacrifice myself, rather than do violence to my principles, I had a right to suppose that, the world would acquiesce in the sacrifice, nor could I of right claim of you, a departure from what I supposed the general influence of my destiny. You have acted upon the great scale which prescribes no limits to true greatness, but boundless benevolence, and universal philanthropy. Had a sceptre been dashed at my feet, it would not have afforded the same pleasure, which I derived from the proud consciousness, not only that I deserved, but that I *possessed your confidence* ! The elevation of your Station, and your renown, which could acquire no additional lustre from official distinction, contrasted with that of a man, who had ceased to be all that he ever had been, in the worlds eye; was such as would have justified you, in any inference, the most damning,

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to his character, and prejudicial to his integrity of heart! You disregarded the standard calculations of mankind, and acted from an impulse, peculiar to yourself!

The solicitude which you have so kindly manifested, for my future welfare cannot fail to inspire me with a proper sense of additional obligation to you. To become a missionary among the Indians, is rendered impossible, for a want of that Evangelical change of heart, so absolutely necessary, to a man who assumes the all important character, of proclaiming to a lost world, the mediation of a blessed Savior! To meliorate the condition of the Indians, to suggest improvements to their growing institutions, to prevent fraud, and peculation, on part of the Governments Agents among them, and to direct the feelings of the Indians in kindness to the Government, and inspire them with confidence in its justice, and magnanimity towards the Red People; have been objects of my constant solicitude, and attention, since I have been among them!

Your suggestion on the subject of my location in Arkansas has received my serious attention, and I have concluded, that it would not be best for me to adopt the course. In that Territory there is no field for distinction—it is fraught with *factions* ; and if my object were to obtain wealth, it must be done by fraud, and peculation upon the Government, and many perjuries would be necessary to its effectuation! Were I disposed to abandon my present seclusion, I would submit to you, if it would not be more advantageous, for me to locate in Natchez. I am well known to the first men of that state. I was presented there under your kind auspices, on your last visit to that country, and I would rally around me very many Tennesseans who have migrated thither! You can think of all the advantages presented by me, and the many more, which will present themselves to your mind!

When I left the world I had persuaded myself that I would lose all care, about the passing political events, of the world, as well as those of my own country, but it is not so, for as often as I visit Cant.¹ Gibson, where I can obtain News Papers, I find that my interest is rather increased than diminished. It is hard for an old Trooper, to forget the *note* of the *Bugle* ! Having been so actively engaged for years past in politics, it is impossible to lose

Library of Congress

all interest in them for some time to come, should I remain in my present situation! I am not so vain as to suppose, myself so important to the world, or to my own country, as to believe that my location on earth can, have any important influence upon its destinies, and therefore the claims, of Patriotism and duty to the land of my birth rest easy!

1 This word has been crossed out and “Fort” written above it in red. It is however plainly “Cant”, *i. e.*, Cantonment.

If we are to judge of the future by the past, it might so happen, were I settled in a state; that I might render my aid in some future political struggle between usurpation, and the rights of the people, in wresting power from the hands of a corrupt Userper, and depositing it, where the spirit of the constitution, and the will of the people would wish it placed. These considerations are not without their influence, for I must ever love that country and its institutions, which give Liberty and happiness to my *kindred* , and *friends* ! And these blessings can only be preserved by vigilance and virtue!

I am rejoiced that you have cleaned the stalls² of Washington, as well as others! Get rid of all the *wolves* and the barking of Puppies, can never destroy the *fold* ! It amuses me to see the leaden pointed arrows shot at you by Gales and Co.³ I trust in God, the Edifice which you have so nobly reared, and are now finishing, will receive, your own peculiar impress, and be worthy of your renown!

2 It was a common assertion of the Jackson men in the campaign of 1828 that it was necessary to have a new administration in order to “clean the Augean stables”, meaning to remove incompetent officials and place honest men of the people in their places.

3 Gales and Seaton, editors and publishers of the *National Intelligencer*.

I pray you to salute your family for me, and be assured, of my sincere devotion and friendship.

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Truly your friend

P. S. I hope to take, and send you, between this and Christmas, some fine Buffaloe meat for your Christmas dinner, or at furthest, by the 8th of Jany.